

# UNDERGROUND IMPULSES: ELENA PARDO'S MEXICAN MULTIMODAL MEDIA PRAXIS

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WALTER FORSBERG

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Mexican animator, cinematographer, and experimental filmmaker Elena Pardo (b. 1976) has made dozens of short and feature-length documentaries, films, videos, and animations over a career that spans more than twenty-five years. Her award-winning, co-directed 2004 feature documentary, *El Rey de los Coleaderos* (dir. Héctor Hernández Gutiérrez and Elena Pardo), has screened widely. In 2013 she co-founded the influential film collective, Laboratorio Experimental de Cine (LEC). Pardo's film career follows a very different path than those prescribed by Mexico's national film production schools and its traditionally male-dominated industry. She is now one of the key ringleaders of alternative cinema production in Mexico.

I first met Elena Pardo at the Think Tank: "Cine desde el más allá" symposium held in Oaxaca in November 2013.<sup>1</sup>

The following interview was conducted over two sessions at the Laboratorio Experimental de Cine in Mexico City's Obreña neighborhood, in September of 2020.

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**Walter Forsberg:** How long have you been making movies?

**Elena Pardo:** I have been working in film crews since I was fifteen years old—doing production, being the "go-for" per-

son, kind of thing. In 1996 I knew only about the existence of two film schools in Mexico: Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos (CUEC) and Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica. They each accepted around fifteen students per annual cohort, and it was really tough to get in. I thought I should study some other career and learn more about film before trying to pass those tests, so I studied Communications at Universidad Iberoamericana and, simultaneously, I met a group of CUEC students and started working on their shoots. I realized that cinematography was my real vocation, but at that point in Mexico there weren't very many workshops being offered. After some research, I decided to attend the Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión in San Antonio de los Baños, Cuba, and cinematography workshops in the United States. That was around 1997. Afterwards, I started working in the camera department on various productions in Mexico but wasn't making my own stuff—only shooting other people's movies. I started making my own movies after taking Naomi Uman's workshop Handmade Films at Centro de la Imagen in 2001.

**WF:** What did you learn through Naomi Uman's workshop?

**EP:** Her workshop instilled in me the idea that I could make my own films. Before that, my conception of making mov-



Filmmaker Elena Pardo interviews Don Roberto, displaced by a mining company from his hometown Salaverna in Zacatecas, Mexico. Photo by Marco Eduardo Casillas Jáquez.

ies was to work on big films simply doing my little part. But after Naomi's workshop I realized that I could make something on my own. We shot, hand-processed, hand-painted, edited, and projected our own 16mm films. That's when I made *El que se fue a la Villa* (2001).<sup>2</sup> We watched Norman McLaren's films during the workshop, and I was very impressed. I tried to decipher McLaren's technique in *A Chairy Tale* (1957) by attempting it in my own film: two characters chase after one chair. I used stop motion and drawn-on-film animation. The result had nothing to do with McLaren, but I ended up very happy with this little film.

**WF:** How did Naomi Uman's workshop differ from your previous training in cinematography?

**EP:** The earlier camera workshops I took in the US and in Cuba were always about producing a clean and perfect image. The idea of putting exposed film into a bucket and swishing it around was blasphemous. In Maine I took a camera assistant workshop, and then an advanced

lighting workshop. The school in Maine had all the fanciest equipment and their philosophy was to train very specialized professionals, preparing them to fit into the huge film factory machinery. Sometime later I went to Cuba, where we had only the basic gear and no fresh film stock. You had to learn to work with what you had, and how to improvise. This was closer to what I could achieve when coming back to Mexico in 1999. My teacher in Cuba was Raúl Rodríguez, from Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos. He was really tough when criticizing your work. It was a great experience.

**WF:** It's striking to me that you were drawn to experimental cinema in light of the fact that you also grew up "in the business." Your father, Héctor Pardo, and his production company made hundreds of TV commercials and industrial films over thirty years. Do you ever reflect on your family?

**EP:** I was still a kid in the 1980s when my father was shooting commercials all

the time. He was always away on location, or in the Sala Rank supervising post-production. I thought his job was awful and promised myself never to do it. Later, in high school, when my parents divorced I went to live with my mother, María Elena Sánchez. At that time, she worked as a publicist for the National Lottery. The weekly lottery drawing involved concerts and other events that happened out of town. Since she didn't want to leave me alone at home, my mother put me to work with the people that were doing television broadcasts, working in broadcast trucks. It was wonderful because I was free to do any job I wanted as long as it was part of the broadcast operations. I continued working with the same team for a few years. They made TV commercials for the SEP (Secretaría de Educación Pública). When the presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio was murdered just prior to the 1994 election, the person in charge of the SEP, Ernesto Zedillo, filled Colosio's spot. So, in a crazy twist of life, I ended up working on TV shows for the new candidate. Political parties were allowed fifteen-minute programs on TV, which we edited from an existing video footage of Zedillo. This served as a crash course in archival filmmaking.

**WF:** In the early 1990s, I would imagine that that kind of audiovisual production environment had no small degree of machismo involved. How did you navigate that, as a young woman?

**EP:** Machismo was present in every activity, not only in the audiovisual production environment. This hasn't changed much, but I would say it was worse then. One became kind of used to it and it was

not so shocking. You just assumed that it would be hard to achieve certain things. My main point of reference was my mother, who had started working at sixteen, paid for her own schooling, and managed to build a career in the 1960s. She is a super tough and amazing woman. So, it didn't occur to me that I wouldn't be able to do something, just because I was a woman. But again, machismo is so widespread that it gets into your head in many forms.



Elena Pardo during an expanded cinema presentation of the project *Desaparecer* (dir. Elena Pardo and Manuel Trujillo, 2016-2017) at Videoex Festival, Zürich. Photo by Ximena Cuevas.

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One form can be insecurity: Am I skilled enough? Am I tough enough? And so on. I started working with different crews, where I felt my skills were recognized. My attention was drawn towards the camera department. It seemed to be the most exciting job on the set, but there were never any women working there. Therefore, my approach to men was to act as a man, or what I understood as manly: I was always dressed as a boy, carrying the heaviest equipment, constantly using crass language, and making the raunchiest *double*

*entendres.* I managed to fit into that world and, after a few years, finally was in charge of the camera crew. The staff would call me *señor* [mister]. Pretty weird. I am happy to see that the present generation of women doesn't need to change themselves to fit in.

**WF:** We've discussed your close relationship with Naomi Uman. I'm wondering what Mexican women filmmakers made an impression on you, early in your career?

**EP:** One is Lourdes Villagómez, whom I assisted with animation techniques. I also met Sarah Minter, who helped build an artistic community and hired me to edit a follow-up documentary film. Ximena Cuevas invited me to teach hand-painting and 16mm film classes with her at Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo. At that museum, I met Annalisa Donatella Quagliata, who gave me a fresh perspective on experimental film. Right now, there is a very powerful women-driven film scene in Mexico. There has been an important shift that is not only about making films, but also about building a better and happier place for filmmaking. I also feel supported by other extraordinary filmmakers and cultural workers like Azucena Losana, Tzutzu Matzin, Luna Marán, and Lola Díaz. Their work has a much wider spectrum. It has moved to a collective arena that includes finding new screening spaces, starting educational projects outside of academia, and opening cracks in otherwise inaccessible institutions.

**WF:** I am always enchanted by artists who also have roles as organizers for other artists—figures with magnetic charisma like André Breton. In terms of experimental and independent filmmaking in Mexico, you are very much an example of this organizing spirit. What kind of cooperative, or collective, experiences influenced you?

**EP:** Quite a few. I grew up in the time of the Zapatista movement. In 1994, I was finishing high school and that movement made a huge impression on me. This led me to start reading a lot of things about

community organization. For a city person like me, from a working family that wasn't overtly political or academic, that was a revelation.

In 2001 I saw how Paolo Davanzo and Lisa Marr's co-op model, from the Echo Park Film Center, built a community in Los Angeles. It all began to make sense: It was possible to make your own films in a community with other people, on a smaller scale. With Iván Ávila Dueñas, Ivonne Fuentes, Pedro Jiménez and other friends we started a collective called *Colectivo Mis Polainas*, an expression that translates literally as "My chaps collective," but colloquially as the "Yeah, whatever collective." Our first project was called *Sueño de Quimeras* (2004), where each member of the group got 100 feet of 16mm short ends from a commercial production. I shot the film *Juquilita*, an animated altar dedicated to the Juquila Virgin from Oaxaca. We won the first prize at the Concurso Nacional de Video Experimental in 2005. That same year I joined another group called La Trinchera Ensemble, with which I started experimenting with expanded cinema, which grew out of conceptual art movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Besides these encounters where I could learn to create with others, I kept looking for opportunities to engage in community-oriented filmmaking projects. In 2004 I met the CIPO group (Consejo Indígena Popular de Oaxaca) and started sharing my filmmaking skills with young people. Some years later I met Zapotec filmmaker Luna Marán, and in 2011 joined her project Campamento Audiovisual Itinerante in Oaxaca, a film camp for young people from nearby communities.

**WF:** Speaking of collective filmmaking projects, can you elaborate on the history of La Trinchera Ensemble, and perhaps some of your expanded cinema tours/shows/performances with this group? La Trinchera was always very interested in multi-screen live projection performances, 16mm loops and all that expanded cinema "jazz."

**EP:** La Trinchera Ensemble is a mal-

leable group of visual and sound artists that perform live events. It was founded by Morris Trujillo, Rafa Balboa and Doris Steinbichler in 2003 as part of the artistic happenings that took place at Epicentro, an important space for the performance art scene at the time. I participated with live handling of 16mm film projections, while other artists used over-head or slide projectors. Sound artists also experimented with different instruments, objects, synthesizers. Image and sound interact through improvisation. With La Trinchera I learned about the rich history and practice of expanded cinema. What I take from those practices is the interplay of the instrument and the maker, the unveiling of the mechanisms of film technology, the predominance of the experience over traditional filmic storytelling diegesis, and the ability of the audience to participate in the making of the piece.

A memorable performance was at Arte Alameda [a former church, now used as a cultural arts center in Mexico City], where we had more than twenty artists participating. There was a huge screen hanging from the middle of the space, onto which we projected from both sides. The place was packed, and it was amazing.

**WF:** Throughout the 2000s, though, you continued to earn a living working in the industry while making your own films and doing expanded cinema performance on the side. In 2009 you relocated to Oaxaca for many years. How did that mark a transition in your career?

**EP:** I worked in film industry projects until 2009, when I moved to Oaxaca to study at Clínicas para la Especialización en Arte Contemporáneo, created by Olga Margarita Dávila and Patricia Tovar at La Curtiduría [that translates as “the tannery”].<sup>3</sup> There I learned about other ways of approaching the creative process, further from film school methods, and closer to collective work.

After finishing this program, I wanted to do something I could dedicate all my energy to, instead of constantly hustling

for industry gigs. In 2013 Morris Trujillo and I decided to start the LEC (Laboratorio Experimental de Cine) that allowed us to bring together the experimental film community through screenings, workshops and filmmaking. We started a non-profit organization, which let us apply for grants and funding.

**WF:** I think that the results of “Cine desde el más allá” that you accomplished from 2014 to 2016, under the government’s new cultural initiative program, were real milestones in the Mexican film scene. I know that screening series grew out of the 2013 Think Tank of the same name in Oaxaca, but how did that series lead to the residency of the LEC at the Museo Tamayo in 2016 and 2017?

**EP:** The Museo Tamayo invited the LEC for a five-month residence program during which we organized 16mm film workshops and shot a collective cine-portrait of the museum workers and the public who visited the exhibition. Twenty-four filmmakers participated in the shoot. We set up a dark room in the museum’s bathroom. The resulting film was installed as a giant loop pulled by four projectors.

**WF:** After your extensive cinematic collaborative work, can you give readers a sense of what was the nature of the independent film labs meeting of 2018 HAZLO TÚ MISMO [Do it yourself], and how did it emerge as the capstone event for the LEC’s year-long residency at the Churubusco film studio workshop?

**EP:** Churubusco is the oldest film studio in Mexico. In what film scholars commonly refer to as the “golden era” of Mexican cinema (circa late 1930s through the early 1960s), Churubusco’s laboratory used to develop miles of film, non-stop, day and night. Today, the lab is not so busy anymore, but in 2017 it still functioned in the same huge building. Inspired by Sején Luna and Naomi Uman, we proposed the Churubusco lab to invite a group of filmmakers to make a film each about the laboratory, involving its union workers. We would learn from each other and share our



Contact sheet images from a photo shoot with Lila Downs at the Mexico City cantina, Salón Tenampa. Photo by Elena Parodo.

techniques. After a few months of navigating bureaucratic labyrinths, Churubusco allowed us to have a one-year residency in one of the lab rooms.

We marked the end of that project in September 2018 by hosting the biennial Film Labs Meeting, which we named, HAZLO TÚ MISMO. I had attended the 2016 Film Labs Meeting in Nantes, France, and was excited to organize one in Mexico. Some of the goals of our event were to find solutions for fixing obsolete machines, to learn other colleagues' running of their labs, to watch the work they do, and to build a network in the region. Over 130 people showed up from around the world. It was overwhelming.

**WF:** Collaboration with other artists is core to your filmmaking praxis, Francis Alÿs being but one. How did you develop your interest in animation as a filmmaking technique by working with Lila Downs?

**EP:** The process of doing visuals for musician Lila Downs gave me the opportunity to develop my animation and live projection skills. My first big show with Lila was in Berlin, during a festival called MEX-artes-Berlin, in 2002. The visuals I

made were partly documentary, partly animation, re-using footage material. I ended up touring with Lila and her band for about four years. Her songs had a strong social and politically conscious bend, so the images had a lot to do with the border, migrants, women, and human rights.

**WF:** Four years of touring sounds grueling. How did you balance that with making your own work?

**EP:** During those years it was sometimes possible to shoot other projects between travels—like the documentary *El Rey de los Coleaderos* (The king of rodeos) co-directed with Héctor Hernández Gutiérrez. Héctor and I initially were awarded a FONCA (Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes) grant to make a short documentary about the Holy Week celebrations in Héctor's town, Jerez, Zacatecas. In the images we shot on the first day we found a very interesting looking character, calmly sitting on his horse watching the party. When we asked people who he was, everyone said: "Oh, yes, Juan de la Torre—*El Rey de los Coleaderos*." During the following four years, we returned to Jerez and made him the central character of our film. He is a migrant who lives in Los Angeles, works in construction, and comes back to Jerez every year for this celebration. He is famous for his *charro* skills in both countries.<sup>4</sup>

**WF:** *El Rey de los Coleaderos* won the Emerging Filmmaker award at the San Diego Film Festival in 2005. Can you elaborate on how you approached the documentary, stylistically?

**EP:** Yes. We had shown it previously at the Morelia Film Fest (2004) and, later, at several other festivals. The documentary tells a very straightforward and naturalistic story. It was my first feature documentary as a director of photography, and it turned out to be very complicated: It is an action-heavy film with men riding horses, bull-tailing cows, drinking while riding, even sometimes fighting. These actions mark the style of the film, and it was a pretty rough ride. I worked mainly hand-held,

using available light, learning little by little how to arrive at shooting locations ahead of our subject Juan de la Torre's *charro* team, using close-up shots to get the details of repetitive actions. Other scenes were shot in Juan's hometown, a small town called Presa de Rosales (near Jerez, in Zacatecas), inhabited mainly by old people, kids and women. Those scenes contrast with the previous ones: There is time to contemplate the arid lands, the way people live, look closely at Juan's strong features, a listen about his tumultuous past with alcohol and drugs, how he arrived in the US, and how he managed to make his own business and be where he is now. Other scenes were shot in Los Angeles, in the San Fernando Valley, where there is a continuation of the Mexican lifestyle. This part is a mix of rodeo-action shots and Juan's daily life.

**WF:** Can you talk about the ways in which your career has traversed so many different film genres—experimental film, animation, projector-performance, documentary? Was it a conscious decision?

**EP:** I certainly have a problem saying “no” to different projects and opportunities, but I also like learning new stuff. Documentaries interest me because they take a social approach to filmmaking. I worked on some projects with the people from Canal 6 de Julio (with Carlos Mendoza Aupetit) making political documentaries because I wanted to be close to the political and social movements that were taking place in the late 1990s and early 2000s. At the time, I wanted to see things from a close perspective, and having a camera for a documentary is often a way to get that proximity. For example, in 2000, during the election of Vicente Fox, I shot footage for Canal 6 de Julio. It was the first time that the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional) lost an election since 1929 and everyone was in the streets, celebrating. It was complete pandemonium. I see a relation between this kind of documentary work and Lila Downs' projects, where social themes are explored from a more poetic perspective, but with the added excitement

of live performances. In the context of Lila's stage performances, expanded cinema is a way to explore that live excitement. I think everything is somehow connected.

**WF:** Beyond your repurposing footage in loops for your expanded cinema performances, you have an enormous film and video archive. Tell me more about your found footage films, and why reuse of older material is central to your practice.

**EP:** I am very interested in seeing how film can tackle social issues, sometimes being very explicit, or poetic, or weird, or funny, as in my short film *De la Naturaleza del Hueso* (2018).<sup>5</sup> I made that film for the 50th anniversary of the 1968 massacre of students at Tlatelolco. Gustavo Díaz Ordaz was a very heavy-handed president and his solutions for everything were very militarized. Many evil things happened during his *sexenio* [six-year presidential term, 1964-70]. But when he greeted in Mexico City the American astronauts who reached the moon, his tone of voice was completely different: He talked lovingly about the stars and the universe, and his words were accompanied with music from Stanley Kubrik's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Thanks to an invitation from the Ambulante documentary festival, I was able to collect archival footage at Cineteca Nacional for my film. I felt I needed more material to illustrate the uncanny paradoxes I was trying to explore, so I used photos and videos from the internet, a Super 8 home movie you lent me of the TV transmission of the Olympics opening ceremonies in 1968, and the sound recording of Díaz Ordaz's address to the astronauts. I like the possibilities that archival film provides to comment on historical events. It gives us the chance to rewrite or reinterpret the official versions of past events and to imagine possible futures. It's possible to do this by cutting, remixing, putting in relation seemingly unrelated elements. And when existing images are not enough, there is always the opportunity to invent other realities through animation.

**WF:** You have such a large corpus of

short works, from more formal and slick commissioned films like *Vicente Rojo en la UNAM* (2015) to looser super 8mm and 16mm film snapshots as in *Mi Barrio* (2009). Your stylistic interests span so many genres. Can you talk about the themes and approaches to some of your favorite short works?

**EP:** *Vicente Rojo en la UNAM* was a commission by the Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City, for a retrospective solo exhibition about the artist Vicente Rojo (b. 1932) and his intense relation with the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Leading up to the shoot, I read all about his work and had an idea in mind about how to make this film. But as I arrived at his studio, I found that he already had a plan: He wouldn't permit us to take any images of him. We were only allowed to shoot a series of printed materials he had chosen in advance, and to record him reading a prepared text. I was terrified after this session, as I didn't want to deliver a "PowerPoint film" about such a mind-blowing artist and graphic designer. I did research on existing archival footage, graphic and photographic materials, and also turned to animation for help. I tried to inscribe his design work and style onto the film as much as possible, hoping to capture some of his characteristic sense of humor.

That approach was very different from *Mi Barrio*, which I shot while taking a workshop with Jem Cohen at the now-extinct Festival Internacional de Cine Contemporáneo de la Ciudad de México. At that time, my childhood house in Mexico City's Condesa neighborhood was being torn down as part of a wave of gentrification. I decided to make an inventory of houses and beautiful places before they were torn down, and to edit them together with some of my childhood house footage. I was inspired by one of Jem Cohen's films where he reads and shoots a list of objects he finds in the street.

Another collaborative short work is *Cinema'u o de cómo curar el mal de archivo*

(2016), inspired by an archivist's meeting I attended in Oaxaca, where I met Inti García, a teacher from Huautla Jiménez, in the Mazatec region of Oaxaca.<sup>6</sup> Inti's family ran a movie theatre and made screenings in remote communities, carrying 35mm projectors on their backs. Renato García Dorantes, Inti's father, learned how to use a video camera and started making his own documentary films. When Renato died, Inti inherited a vast film collection and dreamed of building a community center where people can have access to these materials, and can learn about traditional architecture, cooking, mushroom culture, and the whistling language. I co-directed the film with Tzutzu Matzin, who had worked with Inti in the digitization of the archive. We tried to share a sense of the overwhelming amount of collection objects and talk about the hardships of finding an order and a community that could store the archive. There is an animated part of the film where we try to picture Inti's dreamed community center, show the details of his project, the beauty of the objects, and his labyrinthic task.

**WF:** In lieu of just one *métier*, I see your work spanning many incarnations of cinematic practice: organizing collective filmmaking projects, teaching hand-processing workshops, serving as cinematographer for others, curating screenings. How do you view your career in terms of its wide-ranging praxis?

**EP:** Filmmaking is not only about making your own films. There is a lot more to it. Or, at least, this is true for certain kinds of filmmaking. Experimental or expanded cinema is not taught in academia in Mexico, nor are these practices traditionally considered for funding, distribution or preservation in the Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía or Cineteca Nacional. The same happens with other practices that don't fit the norm because of their duration, theme, shape, output requirements, low-tech quality, lack of author, etc. In order for these "other films" to exist in a community, the filmmaker or



Still from *Pulsos Subterráneos* (dir. Elena Pardo, 2020) of the Vetagrande mine. Photo by Elena Pardo.

film-lover is forced to become a programmer, event organizer, archivist, builder, teacher, student, projectionist, and so on. It is also important to build an active community where all this will not only happen in the present but will continue into the longer term.

**WF:** Can you talk about your current, expanded film project, *Pulsos Subterráneos*? It explores issues surrounding environmental changes and destruction in Mexico, correct?

**EP:** My current project combines everything I like. It's an expanded cinema piece, but this time it's more of a documentary. I try to talk about mining through the landscapes of two different regions in Mexico. One is in Oaxaca, Sierra Juárez. The other is in Vetagrande, a town in Zacatecas. In the 1970s the communities in Sierra Juárez had a previous experience in organizing themselves in order to kick out a company that was exploiting their forests. They have since discovered that the federal government surrendered their land for mining, so they are fighting back. What you see in this area is a very well-preserved territory, beautiful

woods, clean sources of water, and very well-organized communities. On the other hand, Vetagrande is a mining town, founded in the 1500s around one of the first and richest silver veins exploited by the Spanish colonizers. Recently, the mine was transferred to a bigger company for large scale extractions: the town of Vetagrande is sinking, the historical *caminos reales* [Spanish colonial routes] are worn away, entire mountains have disappeared, toxic detritus lay next to the school. All families in this community have always worked in the mine. The town was built because of the mine, so they have a very close relationship with it. In my film I ponder about the complex situation of the two communities, Sierra Juárez and Vetagrande, and about the ways in which they organize themselves. I'm shooting images of landscapes that reveal the presence of the extractive activities, and also evidence the strength of the community. I have interviewed people who have different points of view, and recorded sounds in both areas. I finished one first version of the project that lasts 40 minutes: For the performance I use three 16 mm projectors

to “edit” the film live, projecting previously prepared loops of film. Sound artist Nahú Rodríguez makes a live mix of interviews, location sounds and music played by local musicians where I perform the piece. The film was shown at the Museo Tamayo with tuba player Fabián Campuzano and trombone player Facundo Vargas; at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Oaxaca with multi-instrumentalist Misha Marks, and at the Shapeshifters venue [Oakland, California] with the Voicehandler experimental music project. Depending on the venue, the audience can sit or walk around to see all the things that are happening simultaneously. Ideally, they can choose how to experience the piece and what to take from it. In 2021 I plan to continue shooting and interviewing people. I also want to make an interactive website with all the materials so people can access the footage not shown in the expanded cinema piece.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The Think Tank: “Cine desde el más allá” (“Cinema from beyond”) was a symposium organized by Mara Fortes, Isabel Rojas, Luna Marán, and Garbiñe Ortega; experimental filmmakers gathered there to exchange presentations about how to generate new ways of analyzing and organizing cinema practices.

<sup>2</sup>“El que se fue a la Villa, perdió su silla” is a Mexican saying that means something like: if you move, you’ll lose your spot.

<sup>3</sup>La Curtiduría was a space funded by artist Demián Flores in the midst of the 2006 teachers’ strike that ended with a violent repressive response from the government. It became a refuge for artists and students to organize against this repression.

<sup>4</sup>Skills possessed by a cowboy or ranch hand such as horsemanship and roping.

<sup>5</sup>*De la Naturaleza del Hueso* is available via [www.elenapardo.com](http://www.elenapardo.com).

<sup>6</sup>*Mi Barrio* and *Cinema'a o de cómo curar el mal de archivo* are available via [www.elenapardo.com](http://www.elenapardo.com).

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**WALTER FORSBERG** works as a filmmaker and media conservator based in Mexico City. His films have screened widely, including at the Sundance, Rotterdam, and Toronto film festivals, and at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. A graduate of NYU's Moving Image Archiving and Preservation master's program, he has preserved audiovisual collections at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museo Jumex, and the Smithsonian Institution. From 2014-2018, he served as founding Media Archivist at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. His recent writing on film appears in *BlackFlash* magazine, the anthology *Screening Race in American Nontheatrical Film*, and in the *INCITE Journal of Experimental Media* where he is a contributing editor. He is an adjunct faculty at New York University and a Fulbright Specialist in Library Science.